



Bay Leaf

The bay leaf is one of the oldest spices in the world and refers to the leaves of the laurel bay plant. They are picked, then dried for a couple of weeks in order for their full flavor to flourish. Whole bay leaves are often used for flavoring various soups and stews while crushed leaves can be used to season meats and vegetables.

Bay leaves have a strong, pungent and bitter taste. They are typically not eaten directly, but instead added so that their flavor steps into the food.

Dried bay leaves are used in small amounts, since their flavor is so intense. A single leaf or two is enough for stews and soups, while a single crushed bay leaf provides plenty of seasoning when applied directly to a meat or vegetable.

Bay leaves should be stored in an airtight container out of light. If stored correctly, they can retain their flavor for two years.

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680310 3/7 oz.

Spinach and Leek White Bean Soup

Ingredients

2 teaspoons olive oil
4 leeks, bulb only, chopped
2 cloves garlic, chopped
2 (16 ounce) cans fat-free chicken broth
2 (16 ounce) cans cannellini beans, rinsed and drained

2 bay leaves
2 teaspoons ground cumin
1/2 cup whole wheat couscous
2 cups packed fresh spinach
salt and pepper to taste

Directions

Heat olive oil in a large saucepan or soup pot over medium heat. Add the leeks and garlic; sauté until tender, about 5 minutes. Stir in the chicken broth, cannellini beans, bay leaves and cumin. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to low, and stir in the couscous. Cover, and simmer for 5 minutes. Stir in spinach and season with salt and pepper. Serve immediately.

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